



AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

16 N. High Street, Millville, NJ 08332

SPEAK UP – IT’S YOUR TOWN AND EVERYONE’S REFUGE!

The proposed zoning changes from the new Master Plan will allow for:

- Up to 6 units per acre on at least two priority 1 properties within approved refuge boundaries, despite the 2003 Master Plan recommending that the “Township should continue to protect and enhance the Refuge by supporting the protection of natural resources and water quality of lands adjacent to the refuge area” (MP Reexamination Report, 2010, p. 9).
- An additional 11,624 residents (Draft MP, p. 108) – increasing the current population by 70%. Between 2000 and 2008, Middle’s housing growth rate increased 22% compared to the rest of the state, which only saw 6% growth over the same period. (pg. 38, Draft MP) This increase doesn’t even include the additional 96,440 summer residents projected to be visiting the county by 2025 (Draft MP, p. 35).
- Over 5,000 new houses, plus over 2 million square feet of office and commercial space (Draft MP, p. 107).
- Developing nearly as much land in the environs (over 950 acres) as it does in the growth centers (over 1,000 acres) (Draft MP, p.50 & 56). Middle cannot claim it is pursuing center-based development when its zoning plan would create interconnected high-density growth centers surrounded by suburban sprawl.
- A grandfather provision that would permit any pre-existing lot that is 35,000 sq. ft. in size or larger; requiring a minimum of only three-tenths of an acre (15,000 sq ft) of unconstrained uplands on environmentally sensitive lands. Plan proposes 1-3.5 acre zoning outside of growth centers despite recommendations from NJDEP and the 2003 Master Plan to increase lot size to 10 acres (MP Reexamination Report, 2010, p. 7).

Potential impacts include:

- Loss of rural character and much of the township’s remaining forest and farmland. Middle has already seen a 33% loss of its vacant, largely forested land and a 50% loss of farm properties over the past ten years (Draft MP, p. 31).
- Further degradation of already stressed freshwater resources from overuse of groundwater supplies and contamination from septic disposal. Middle’s Natural Resource Inventory clearly states that groundwater within the township has already been degraded by contamination from underground septic disposal (NRI, 2007, p. 27). The nitrate dilution model being used by the township is meant to avoid wide-scale contamination within various watersheds. It does not mean that the concentrated septic systems permitted under the proposed grandfather provision and in the SR and CD Zones will not lead to more local pollution, which in turn will necessitate more costly public water and sewer infrastructure. This is a major flaw in the current Master Plan.

- A joint study recently released by NJDEP and USGS shows that aquifer withdrawals by purveyors are already causing reductions in stream flow and impacting wetlands. Two of five of Cape May County's watersheds are already in deficit and have reduced stream flow due to excessive water withdrawals; four of five are projected to go into deficit in the future (*Strategies for Sustainable Water Supplies in Cape May County*, 2010).
- Increased salt-water intrusion – threatening contamination of municipal water production wells. The USGS study warns that salt-water intrusion could migrate another 7,100 feet inland. The county's water is being removed and not replaced; allowing tens of billions of gallons of fresh water to go salty.
- More unbearable traffic and increased taxes to support greater demand for municipal services and infrastructure. Studies have shown that development, especially residential development, actually costs a community more in schools, roads, sewers and other services than the tax revenue generated by the development (Land Trust Alliance, 1994).
- Schools will obviously need to expand and make up the bulk of property taxes. According to the NJ Department of Education, it costs about \$15,000 to educate a child in New Jersey. If Middle receives half its education money (\$7,500) from the state, that means that the other half (\$7,500) will come from new and existing homeowners.

What you can do to protect your freshwater resources and the refuge:

Middle residents and refuge advocates need to speak out or risk seeing what remains of the township's countryside and forests buried under more costly water polluting sprawl. Middle Township officials are telling residents they shouldn't worry about proposed future growth policies (and overdevelopment) within the community, because it isn't "instantaneous" growth and won't happen overnight. In New Jersey, zoning is destiny. Whether the growth called for under the town's plan occurs overnight or over the next fifteen years, it doesn't make it any more acceptable when the end result is the same. The amount of future growth and the demand it will place on overstressed water supplies is completely unsustainable, and local residents need to question whether town officials have seriously considered the implications and impacts that such development and destruction of open spaces will have on the community's character, traffic, water supply, and natural resources of international importance

Tell Middle officials they need to reduce the amount of growth and population density proposed in the environs to discourage further water quality degradation and loss of environmentally sensitive lands. Tell officials to support the Cape May Refuge by placing all areas within the approved refuge expansion boundaries into the Rural Conservation Zone and to support NJDEP's recommendation for 10-acre zoning in the environs. To learn more, visit www.littoralsociety.org.



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